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Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), by which the Council requested me to report every 30 days on the status of financial, logistical and administrative arrangements for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and on the extent of progress by UNAMID towards full operational capability. The report covers significant developments during the month of April 2008, including the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. It also provides an update on the Darfur political process.

II. Security situation

2. The security situation throughout Darfur remained extremely volatile during the reporting period. Significant clashes occurred between the rebel movements and Government forces, as well as armed factions of the rebel movements, especially in the States of Western and Southern Darfur. Banditry continued to affect United Nations and other humanitarian staff and operations.

3. Tension continued on the Chad-Sudan border where fierce fighting erupted during the night of 31 March after Chadian armed opposition groups based in Darfur reportedly infiltrated Chad territory and attacked Chadian regular forces in Adre. As a result, 20 staff members of international non-governmental organizations had to be evacuated from Beida (90 km south of El Geneina). Some 40 injured Chadian armed opposition members were transported to El Geneina for medical treatment.

4. Clashes on the Chad-Sudan border continued on 12 April when the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked a Sudanese armed forces post at Kush Kush (15 km north-west of Seleia). The Sudanese armed forces retaliated by conducting air attacks and shelling JEM positions near Seleia. Sixty-two civilians were killed by the attacks.

5. Also on 12 April, forces of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)-Abdul Wahid conducted an armed attack against the Sudanese armed forces in the Kass area south of Jebel Marra, reportedly killing 17 Sudanese Government police

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officers. On 16 April, SLM/A-Minni Minawi and SLM/A-Free Will clashed to the east of Nyala, resulting in three reported fatalities and three injured.

6. Tribal fighting over livestock continued between the Salamat and Habbaniya in Southern Darfur. During one clash on 17 April, several hundred Habbaniya on horseback and 31 vehicles clashed with the Salamat, resulting in 31 Habbaniya fatalities and 63 injured. Six Salamat were reportedly killed and one injured.

7. During the first half of the reporting period, there was also significant tension in El Fasher between the Sudanese armed forces and Government-allied militia, reportedly because of the failure of the Government to pay the militia their expected salaries. El Fasher market was looted by the militia on 6 April, resulting in one civilian death and five injured.

8. On 29 April, in the SLM/A-controlled area of El Hashim and Heles north of Kutum in Northern Darfur, one woman was killed and property and livestock were destroyed during aerial attacks by the Sudanese armed forces and fighting between Government and rebel forces.

9. On 2 May, following air attacks by the Sudanese armed forces the previous day on the village of Umm Sidir in Northern Darfur, UNAMID successfully airlifted eight civilians wounded in the attack, which had also left two men dead. The evacuation was conducted at the request of humanitarian organizations and in coordination with Sudanese authorities. UNAMID initiated an investigation on the ground, and the peacekeeping forces continued to monitor the situation.

10. Aerial bombardments continued on 4 May in Northern Darfur. Three people were killed and one was seriously injured when an unidentified aircraft bombed the villages of Ein Bessar and Hatan. The same day, an unidentified aircraft bombed Shegeg Karo village (approximately 50 km north-east of Umm Baru), killing 12 people and wounding 27 others. On 5 May, UNAMID was denied permission from the Government to evacuate the wounded civilians from Shegeg Karo.

11. As a result of violent clashes in all three States of Darfur so far this year, more than 100,000 civilians were forced to flee their homes, many of them not for the first time. Camps for internally displaced persons in Darfur, many already beyond their capacity in terms of size and the availability of basic services, struggled to absorb the new arrivals. Meanwhile, violence during the reporting period meant rural areas were increasingly cut off from markets or relief assistance. Despite the best efforts of humanitarian agencies to maintain assistance levels, security conditions in Darfur, including increasing incidents of banditry, led to a reduction in humanitarian access and the quality of service provision, with serious implications for the health and well-being of vulnerable groups.

12. The humanitarian community itself also continued to be subject to violence. Since the start of the year, six aid workers have been killed and 106 vehicles carjacked. The World Food Programme (WFP) was forced to reduce food rations to more than 3 million beneficiaries in Darfur at a time when malnutrition is already unacceptably high in several areas of the region.

III. Mission strength

13. As at 17 April, the total strength of UNAMID uniformed personnel was 7,019 troops, 274 military staff officers, 146 military observers, 1,551 individual police officers, and one formed police unit of 140 personnel.

14. Recruitment of civilian positions currently stands at 1,474 of 5,569 authorized posts, or 26 per cent of full capacity. There are 460 international staff currently deployed, 880 national staff, and 134 United Nations Volunteers. In addition, UNAMID employs 1,700 individual contractors.

IV. Deployment of UNAMID

15. Preparations for the deployment of additional troops and formed police units to Darfur continued to be hampered by significant logistical challenges and insecurity. During the period under review, the equipment of several military and formed police units earmarked for UNAMID arrived in the Sudan. The movement of cargo and personnel to and throughout the mission area has been severely limited, however, by delays in the clearance of cargo from Port Sudan, banditry along the convoy routes, insufficient material-handling equipment, and a lack of capacity of the local market to meet the cargo transport requirements of UNAMID. The movement of equipment by road from Port Sudan to Darfur, some 1,400 miles, currently takes an average of seven weeks.

16. The equipment of the advance party of the first Egyptian infantry battalion was flown into Darfur on 15 March and is en route to its base in Northern Darfur. The movement of the equipment of the advance party of the first Ethiopian infantry battalion began on 2 April and the equipment is expected to arrive in Darfur by mid-May. The advance party of the Ethiopian infantry battalion will deploy in May, and the main body is due to begin to deploy in June. The equipment of the Nepalese formed police unit which arrived in Port Sudan on 18 February is still in transit to Nyala. The equipment of the Indonesian formed police unit arrived in Port Sudan on 25 April but has not yet been released from Customs.

17. While the advance party of the Chinese engineer unit has been on the ground for several months, the main body of the unit can deploy only once the movement of its equipment from Port Sudan to Darfur is completed. Some 75 per cent of the equipment is now en route to Darfur, but 25 per cent remains in Port Sudan.

18. In an extremely disturbing development, a convoy of three commercial vehicles carrying two UNAMID containers of contingent-owned equipment, including ammunition and WFP food supplies, from El Obeid to Nyala was hijacked by 30 unidentified armed men on board two Landcruisers on 29 April, near Abu Karinka, 100 km east of Ed Daein in Southern Darfur. UNAMID immediately notified the Government of the Sudan and began patrols and aerial search for the missing trucks and cargo. Efforts to recover the cargo continue as a matter of top priority for UNAMID, and an investigation into the causes of the incident, including the lack of escort, is ongoing.

19. The movement by road of the equipment of the Egyptian transport company from Port Sudan to Nyala has yet to commence, and the equipment of the Egyptian

engineer company which is currently in transit will arrive in El Fasher in the coming weeks.

20. The mission leadership requested the assistance of the Government of the Sudan in addressing the backlog at Port Sudan, streamlining the Customs clearance process for UNAMID cargo, and ensuring security along the main transportation routes. The mission's severe transportation capacity challenges are being addressed by augmenting inland road transport with cargo airlifts from El Obeid to El Fasher. It is likely that reliance on movement of cargo by air will increase as part of the overall effort to expedite deployment. In addition, the mission is exploring the possibility of utilizing rail transportation from Port Sudan to Nyala.

21. For civilian posts, recruitment is currently focused on mission support and senior level substantive posts. During the period under review, the Director for Humanitarian Liaison and Director of Human Rights were selected and assumed their functions. Recruitment of the civilian Chief of Staff and Director of Public Information has also been completed and efforts to ensure their expeditious deployment are well advanced. Recruitment efforts are encountering significant difficulties, however: 40 international staff selected for appointment in UNAMID declined the offer and many short-listed candidates failed to confirm interest in being interviewed for posts in UNAMID, citing reasons related to the harsh living and working conditions in Darfur.

Deployment plan

22. A team from the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support, visited the Sudan from 10 to 17 April 2008 to identify, in collaboration with the mission, steps that need to be taken to expedite the deployment of UNAMID. The team and UNAMID developed an enhanced deployment plan which aims at achieving 80 per cent deployment of the authorized strength of UNAMID by the end of 2008. This amounts to 15,300 out of 19,555 troops, 3,018 out of 3,772 individual police officers, and 12 out of 19 formed police units. Achieving this deployment target requires the following: (a) rotations of the current 10 infantry battalions already deployed must occur at the United Nations standard of strength and equipment; (b) six new battalions (two from Ethiopia, two from Egypt, one from Senegal and one from Thailand) and two new companies (from Nepal) will have to deploy in 2008; (c) vital enabling units should deploy before the rainy season, including engineer, transportation, multi-role logistics and medical units; and (d) 11 additional formed police units should deploy in 2008.

23. Achieving this target will present tremendous logistical challenges and require serious augmentation of the mission's staffing and reception infrastructure. There is also an urgent need to enhance the mission's engineer capability. For this to happen in a timely manner, the direct assistance of troop-contributing countries, donors, and the Government of the Sudan is critical.

24. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has already made contact with the concerned troop- and police-contributing countries and has informed the Government of the Sudan of important aspects of the plan, particularly with regard to the requirement for enhanced engineering. The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support will convene a meeting of troop- and police-contributing countries in the coming week to present the plan and seek additional

engineering capacity. The purpose of the meeting will also be to secure the commitment of Member States to flexibility with regard to the deployment locations of their personnel throughout the mission's area of operations. The fundamental requirement to deploy units with self-sustaining capability will also be reiterated, particularly since newly deployed battalions will be located in extremely austere sites for a minimum of six months.

25. In the light of the transportation challenges described in paragraphs 15 to 20, meeting the deployment targets requires troop- and police-contributing countries to urgently provide the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the lists of equipment to be transported into the mission area. The sustained assistance of the Government of the Sudan will be central to the successful implementation of the plan, particularly assistance in making available land for the expansion of the existing UNAMID camps and the construction of new camps at Seleia, Buram, Habila and Um Dukhum; and the taking of all possible measures to ensure the rapid and secure movement of mission equipment into Darfur.

26. Progress towards full operational capability and, most importantly, towards the mission's ability to effectively carry out its mandated tasks also requires contributions from Member States of the still missing critical capabilities, namely, three medium utility helicopters, one aerial reconnaissance unit, one medium transport unit, one heavy transport unit and one multi-role logistics unit. While predeployment preparations are under way for the light tactical helicopter unit offered by Ethiopia, four additional light helicopters are still being sought to meet the operational requirements of the mission. At the same time, there is still a requirement to identify, in collaboration with the African Union, police-contributing countries that have the capability to deploy the remaining seven formed police units.

Mission support aspects

27. Agreements for land have been finalized for the construction of supercamps at El Fasher, Nyala, Zalingei and El Geneina, as well as a camp for substantive personnel at El Geneina. In the coming weeks, efforts will be made to clarify the information on the lease and ownership of the lands for the 31 camps inherited by UNAMID from the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), as multiple ownerships are being claimed. Finalizing this issue will be critical to enable UNAMID to proceed with the necessary work to expand the camps.

28. During the period under review, the schedule for AMIS liquidation was developed, physical verification of assets continued, and a coordination mechanism for land and other third-party claims was established. It is anticipated that the handover of ex-AMIS equipment and assets to UNAMID will be completed in June 2008. However, other AMIS liquidation processes, such as land and claims issues, are likely to continue beyond that date.

29. An assessment of the existing 31 ex-AMIS camps is ongoing to determine their overall condition and the requirements to bring them up to United Nations standards. A report on the assessment's findings is expected by mid-May. In addition, required assets and materials for constructing and maintaining 82 community policing centres have been identified by UNAMID police and engineers and are being collected. The community policing centres will constitute the office space for UNAMID police personnel operating within or adjacent to camps for internally displaced persons.

30. Water remains a critical issue for UNAMID operations. Vigorous efforts continue to find sources for additional supply in collaboration with the El Fasher Urban Water Authority. The construction of a 2.5 km, 4-inch diameter pipeline to the proposed supercamp location at El Fasher has started. In addition, negotiations for land acquisition at potential drilling sites and a procurement process for well-drilling have been initiated. Improved water management strategies are being pursued in all existing camps, and a 90 per cent wastewater reclamation programme for Zam Zam has been completed.

31. UNAMID expects to complete work on helicopter parking spaces at Nyala and El Geneina airports before the onset of the wet season in July.

V. UNAMID operations

32. During the reporting period, UNAMID increased significantly its patrolling and investigation activities, including joint military and police patrols in the northern corridor of Western Darfur, where large numbers of civilians were displaced during the fighting in February 2008. Until 21 April 2008, these activities involved the conduct of 476 confidence-building patrols in 738 villages across the three Darfur States, 113 escort patrols, 44 administrative patrols, 18 investigative patrols, and the provision of convoy security as required.

33. In mid-April, the first rotation of troops started since the transfer of authority from AMIS to UNAMID on 31 December 2007. The process of rotating nearly half the force over the coming two to three months, combined with the assistance required to facilitate the deployment of new units, will further limit the mission's already stretched operational capacity.

34. UNAMID police entered the second phase of a three-phase patrolling plan for the camps for internally displaced persons, expanding the duration of its daily patrols from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., to cover the period from 8 a.m. to midnight. The Police Commissioner is working to achieve a 24-hour patrolling schedule by July. In sector south, 277 volunteers from six camps for internally displaced persons have undergone basic training in community policing and are now working in partnership with the local Sudanese police to support the maintenance of law and order in the camps. These initiatives are being pursued in parallel with UNAMID police efforts to provide basic training to the local police on human rights and gender issues.

35. UNAMID continued to face obstacles to its freedom of movement despite the clear right to freedom of movement established in the status-of-forces agreement of 9 February. On 27 March, for instance, UNAMID troops based in Sortony were stopped at a checkpoint set up by SLM/A-Abdul Wahid and told that 24 hours' notice was required to access all areas controlled by that group. On 10 April, unidentified gunmen attacked a UNAMID police patrol approximately 2 km north of the Zam Zam camp for internally displaced persons. As a result of the attack, a police officer was wounded and two UNAMID vehicles were seized by the attackers. One vehicle was recovered by Sudanese authorities but one is still missing.

36. In order to address these security challenges, the senior leadership holds monthly meetings with representatives of the Government of the Sudan in Khartoum. Weekly security meetings are also held between UNAMID and Sudanese

Government officials in the three sector headquarters. To the same end, UNAMID is working to establish regular contacts with the rebel movements also.

37. As at the end of the reporting period, more than 50 quick-impact projects, totalling over $1 million, were being implemented by UNAMID in cooperation with community partners, universities, the United Nations country team and international agencies.

VI. Political process

38. During the reporting period, no further significant progress was made towards holding formal substantive negotiations. The lack of political will among the parties, as well as the deteriorating security situation in the region, remain the main obstacles impeding progress.

39. On 31 March and 1 April in El Fasher, UNAMID held a seminar with the participation of UNAMID senior management, civil affairs, the representatives of the Preparatory Committee for the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation, and the Joint Mediation Support Team to review the status of the Darfur Peace Agreement in relation to the UNAMID mandate. The mission agreed to work with the parties to restructure the Ceasefire Commission and, to this end, will convene the Joint Commission as an urgent priority.

40. During the reporting period, the United Nations and African Union Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, and the Joint Mediation Support Team continued to engage the parties on the preparations for substantive negotiations. The Special Envoys undertook two missions to the Sudan in April. In the course of their consultations, they urged the parties to cease all hostilities, take concrete steps towards improving the security environment in Darfur, and intensify their preparations for the talks.

41. On 8 April in Juba, the five groups which had united under the umbrella of the United Resistance Front (URF) in December (URFF, SLA-Khamees, SLA-Bakheit/Shogar, NMRD and JEM-Collective Leadership), formally announced their leadership structure under Bahar Idriss Abu Garda (JEM-CL). URF represents one of the five main groupings of non-signatory movements, together with JEM-Khalil Ibrahim, SLM/A-Abdul Shafie, SLM-Unity, and SLM/A-Abdul Wahid.

42. Together with the Joint Mediation Support Team, UNAMID also increased its engagement with civil society organizations, women's groups, traditional leaders, intellectuals and leaders of internally displaced persons. In all three States, the mission facilitated regular meetings of Darfurians to advance the participation of civil society in the peace process.

43. The fifth Sudan national population census commenced on 22 April. In the light of the public opposition of some leaders of camps for internally displaced persons, enumerators did not attempt to gain access to those camps, including Abu Shouk, Kalma, Khamsa Dagaia, Hassa Hissa and Hamadiya.

VII. Financial aspects

44. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/232, authorized the Secretary-General to establish a special account for UNAMID and appropriated the amount of $1,275.7 million for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, an equivalent of $106.3 million per month, for the establishment of UNAMID.

45. As at 31 March 2008, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to approximately $691.3 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to $2,459.1 million.

46. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), paragraph 5 (a), reimbursement of troop costs associated with contingent personnel deployed to AMIS for the period from 1 October to 31 December 2007 has been made.

VIII. Observations

47. I am deeply disappointed that the parties continue to resort to violence and thus perpetuate the conflict in Darfur. The ongoing military activities of the rebel groups and reprisal actions of the Government and its allied militia are costing civilian lives, limiting humanitarian operations, severely constraining efforts to move towards a negotiated settlement and, in addition, presenting a fundamental challenge to UNAMID, which is not a peacekeeping force designed to deploy or function in a war zone. Owing to the violence in Western and Northern Darfur, the mission's freedom of movement was restricted in violation of the status-of-forces agreement.

48. I am also extremely concerned about the security situation in the Chad-Sudan border area. I call on the Governments of the Sudan and Chad to implement the Dakar Agreement without delay and restore security and order in the border area.

49. A stronger UNAMID presence is undoubtedly in the best interests of all parties concerned about bringing stability to Darfur. Strengthening the mission and achieving our deployment goals in 2008 require immediate action by troop-contributing countries, donors and the Government of the Sudan.

50. To those countries whose personnel are deployed with UNAMID in Darfur, I wish to reiterate my deep appreciation, on behalf of the international community, for their service and valour. I encourage donors to continue their efforts to assist those countries in meeting the rotation schedules and United Nations strength and equipment levels in the coming two to three months. I reiterate my appeal to all new troop- and police-contributing countries to immediately provide their lists of major equipment for all units scheduled to deploy in 2008, so that the complex deployment arrangements for that equipment can begin before the rainy season. We will also be dependent upon the Government of the Sudan to actively facilitate these efforts, including by providing both the land for the construction of camps and security along transportation routes.

51. The deployment of additional troops must also be accompanied by solutions to the missing critical capabilities of UNAMID. I call once again on Member States to contribute the transportation and aviation capabilities which are so vital in multiplying the effectiveness of the mission.

52. When fully deployed, the mission will address a broad range of responsibilities, the protection of civilians foremost among them. But UNAMID cannot be a substitute for political engagement. Progress on the political track is essential if peace and security are to be restored in Darfur. It is only through political dialogue that the parties can reach a viable, sustainable and comprehensive solution to the crisis, and the work of UNAMID and the Special Envoys to facilitate a cessation of hostilities is vital in this regard. All parties must return to the negotiation table to demonstrate their seriousness about ending the long suffering of their people, and enable them to be represented and participate in the political process in the Sudan.

53. In order to strengthen the United Nations-African Union mediation, I am working with the Chairperson of the African Union to appoint a joint chief mediator as soon as possible to be based full time in the Sudan. At the same time, all Member States must look at what guarantees or incentives they can provide to the parties to stop the fighting and give them the confidence to join the peace talks. If dialogue and security are to be restored in Darfur, the international community must send a clear and coordinated signal to both Government and rebel groups that violence and impunity have to end immediately.